

Thank you very much. Happy Saint Patrick's Day. God bless you all, and please welcome the Prime Minister.

[At this point, Prime Minister Bruton made remarks.]

The President. Before we go down to the receiving line, I want to say something to you. Our piper, Mr. Blair, and his wife prepared the song that we marched down the stairs to. It's called "Ireland at Peace." And they did it, in a way, fulfilling the responsibility that each

American has, of Irish heritage, to support that. I thought it was a remarkable thing that he and his wife did. It was a lovely melody. You heard it when we came down the stairs. And I'd like for you to give him a hand. [Applause]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:10 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mary Robinson of Ireland and piper Richard Blair.

Statement on Signing the Tenth Continuing Resolution

March 15, 1996

Today, I have signed into law H.J. Res. 163, the Tenth Continuing Resolution for fiscal 1996.

H.J. Res. 163 provides for a temporary extension of appropriations—March 16th through March 22nd—for activities funded in four of the five appropriations bills that have not been enacted into law. The District of Columbia receives no new Federal funds, but retains authority to use local funds.

It is regrettable that I must sign yet another continuing resolution. However, Congress still has not passed five of this year's thirteen appropriations bills in acceptable form, so this measure is necessary to prevent a third government shutdown.

We are now nearly halfway through the fiscal year. Continuing uncertainty over funding levels and authorities has impaired the ability of our Federal agencies and State and local governments to provide critical services to the public.

I urge Congress to meet its responsibilities by sending me legislation for the remaining fiscal 1996 appropriations bills in an acceptable form. I have made it clear to the Congress what changes need to be made to make them acceptable.

The purpose of those changes is to ensure, as we work to balance the budget and control discretionary spending, that we protect our nation's investments in education, the environment, law enforcement, and technology.

Unfortunately, while the Senate has made improvements, the current House and Senate versions of an omnibus appropriations bill for the remainder of the year still do not protect these national priorities. Moreover, they contain harmful and unacceptable legislative riders affecting the environment and other issues.

We have a responsibility to the American people to act together to resolve our differences. I am committed to doing so. I urge the Congress to act quickly to enact acceptable appropriations legislation for the remainder of the fiscal year.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 15, 1996.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 163, approved March 15, was assigned Public Law No. 104-116.